

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-01
USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 IO-13 /076 W
-----037214 141535Z /42

R 140848Z DEC 77
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5366
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 2190

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PLAB, XF, IZ
SUBJECT: TEMPORARY ICATU HEADQUARTERS IN BAGHDAD

REF: TRIPOLI 1529

1. LOCAL PRESS QUOTES ALI AL-MAWLA, SECRETARY GENERAL
OF INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF ARAB TRADE UNIONS
(ICATU) AS SAYING THAT ICATU HEADQUARTERS HAS BEEN
TRANSFERRED FROM CAIRO TO BAGHDAD. IN CONVERSATION
WITH USINT OFFICER ON DECEMBER 9, AN IRAQI LABOR
LEADER ACKNOWLEDGED ARRIVAL HERE OF MAWLA AND OTHER
MEMBERS OF ICATU PERMANENT SECRETARIAT BUT SAID THAT
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FINAL DECISION ON HEADQUARTERS MUST AWAIT ICATU
SESSION SCHEDULED FOR KUWAIT IN TWO MONTHS TIME.

2. COMMENT: IRAQIS WOULD PROBABLY LIKE TO SEE
ICATU SET UP SHOP IN BAGHDAD. PLETHORA OF INTER-
ARAB PROFESSIONAL GROUPS (LAWYERS' FEDERATION,
GEOLOGISTS' FEDERATION, ETC.) ALREADY EXIST IN

BAGHDAD. ASIDE FROM ENHANCING IRAQ'S CLAIM TO BE AT CENTER OF PAN-ARAB MOVEMENT, SUCH ORGANIZATIONS, WHICH ARE OFTEN HEADED BY IRAQIS, PROVIDE VIRTUALLY AUTOMATIC PRAISE FOR POLICIES OF BAGHDAD REGIME. ORGANIZATIONS ALSO TAKE USUALLY HARDLINE STANDS ON AREA ISSUES, INCLUDING MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT EFFORTS, WHICH ARE WELL BEYOND THEIR PROFESSIONAL PURVIEW.

3. IRAQI REGIME MIGHT FIND IT MORE DIFFICULT TO GET ICATU TO DANCE PRO-IRAQI REJECTIONIST TUNE, BUT ICATU MODERATES WOULD ALSO FIND BAGHDAD ATMOSPHERE UNCONGENIAL AND GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED MEDIA COULD STIFLE SIGNS OF DISSENT. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO CONSIDER WAYS IN WHICH MODERATE ARABS MEMBERS OF ICATU COULD BE ENCOURAGED TO HOLD OUT FOR ALTERNATIVES TO BAGHDAD AS ICATU HEADQUARTERS. ONE OF THE POINTS THAT MIGHT BE STRESSED IS THE CAPTIVE NATURE OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT HERE. A BASE IN WHICH THERE IS AT LEAST SOME SEMBLANCE OF FREE LABOR MIGHT BE MORE APPROPRIATE. AT THE VERY LEAST, WE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT ICATU IN BAGHDAD MAY NOT BE IN OUR OWN BEST INTERESTS.

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